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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

*Memorandum*



THE SITUATION IN VIETNAM

Information as of 0600  
17 February 1965

PREPARED FOR THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL  
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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
Office of Current Intelligence  
17 February 1965

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

The Situation in Vietnam as of 0600 EST

Communist Military Developments

1. No unusual Chinese, North Vietnamese, or Soviet military moves have been detected since aerial photography of 14 February revealed some 28 additional MIG 15/17 jet fighters had deployed to Mengtzu, about 60 miles north of the Vietnamese border.

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5. [redacted] schools  
are closed in the North Vietnamese capital and that

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older people and young children are to be temporarily evacuated from the city.

6. A UPI correspondent in Saigon filed a report today quoting "sources just arrived from Hanoi" to the effect that the USSR had delivered surface-to-air missiles to the North Vietnamese.

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7. It seems unlikely that any SAMs the Soviets may have agreed to provide would have had time to arrive yet. If personnel and equipment had already been alerted in the Soviet Far East and if the decision had been made shortly after Kosygin arrived in Hanoi on 6 February, it is just possible that initial elements could have arrived by rail through China.

It would require at least a week for the first of any SAM sites in North Vietnam to achieve limited operational capability.

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8. There are no Soviet or East European military activities which seem related to the Vietnamese situation. Training exercises are underway in East Germany and Czechoslovakia but there is no indication of a heavy or unusual buildup of Soviet forces. US military patrols in East Berlin report no abnormal activities and the attitude of Soviet personnel on access routes to West Berlin continues to be relaxed and cooperative.

#### Communist Political Developments

9. Moscow is apparently marking time on Vietnam until Soviet leaders complete their assessment of Premier Kosygin's trip. In a 15 February talk with a top-level UK Foreign Ministry official, Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko reportedly confined his comments on Vietnam to a recitation of the 8 February official Soviet Government statement on the question. He made no attempt to broach the possibility of some action by the Geneva co-chairmen on the crisis.

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10. Ambassador Kohler also comments that there was a marked decrease in the USSR's 15 February press coverage of Vietnam. He noted that Soviet TV news programs over last weekend made no mention of Vietnam.

11. The US Mission in Berlin has reported that it sees no imminent political or military development which the USSR might deliberately stage in reaction to recent US actions in Vietnam.

12. Mass demonstrations in Communist China to protest US attacks on North Vietnam apparently have come to an end. No reference to such demonstrations or rallies have been heard in monitored Chinese broadcasts since 12 February, when Peiping claimed that in five days 11 million people had participated in anti-US rallies. By contrast, Peiping last August claimed that 20 million people joined in similar demonstrations.

13. Regional radios in the area adjacent to North Vietnam have paid much less attention to the current crisis than they did to the Tonkin Gulf incidents last August. Nanning Radio, for example, covered the Tonkin Gulf crisis for at least six days; this time monitored Nanning broadcasts have not been heard to mention the Vietnam situation since 10 February.

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Viet Cong Activity

16. Viet Cong pressure continues, with some slight rise apparent in the number of incidents of all types reported on a daily basis. Unconfirmed press reports state that on 15 February a Viet Cong force estimated at two companies ambushed a four-truck government convoy carrying provincial troops through a mountain pass near Pleiku. Government losses were reported as 32 killed, 8 wounded, and 10 missing. The press has also reported three other attacks north of Saigon, in which 25 South Vietnamese soldiers were killed and two Americans wounded. To the south the press reports this morning that Viet Cong forces suffered heavy losses when they attacked a government outpost in the Mekong delta, while only 2 defenders were killed and one is missing. Sabotage against government lines of communications has continued at a high level.

17. South Vietnamese government casualties for the week 7-13 February totalled 1,558 (290 KIA, 657 WIA, 611 MIA/Captured), according to MACV. Total weapons losses were 1,106. These losses appear to be the heaviest of any week of the war so far; it is considered possible, however, that many carried as missing in action may eventually return to their units after having fled under Viet Cong attack.

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Political Developments in South Vietnam

20. The government of Premier Phan Huy Quat, installed yesterday in Saigon, is predominantly civilian. It includes a cross-section of the country's major religions and strikes a balance of geographic regions. Although not immune to early political attack, it is more carefully designed than its predecessors to gain Buddhist acceptance. It has been given initial favorable endorsement by General Thi, who commands the strongly Buddhist I Corps area. General Khanh, although proceeding with establishment of a military-civilian council to act as a legislature until elections are held in the indefinite future, has implied that the Armed Forces Council will again step in if Quat proves ineffective.

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